



Tager tales
All set for first trip
Mary Ann and Flag



Tanamakoon Rangers

Building a runway



beans and Spanish rice was a popular change from the usual indoor meal.

When our enrolment reached one hundred and twenty-five, we decided it was all we could handle with our set-up, and limited our numbers accordingly. The campers came for four weeks or eight as before, but there were additions and changes. There had been a growing realization that our location was especially fitted for older children, and that we were doing our best work with them; eventually we limited new enrolments to children ten years old and up, and the youngest tribe gradually became extinct. That policy held throughout the rest of my regime. The move was made with extreme regret, but it seemed right at the time. The Ojibways were now the youngest tribe, made up of campers ten and eleven years old. The Sioux included those twelve and thirteen years old. This tribe had been added in 1931. The Crees were fourteen to sixteen and the Algonquins were seventeen years and up. The first group of Algonquins or Counsellors-in-Training, (C.I.T.s as we called them), came in 1933, seven in all. They had wanted to return, to take more responsibility, to assist the counsellors, and to learn to teach. They were not counsellors, nor even assistants, but they were potential counsellors.

After that first summer's experience, it would have been hard to visualize camp without a group of Counsellors-in-Training; but they needed very careful direction, for the transition from a camper to a counsellor was difficult.

Each year the privileges and rights of the Counsellors-in-Training were carefully outlined to them before they arrived and their status was made clear to the camp. Every member of the staff felt a responsibility toward them to see that the purpose for which they had come was kept in mind. They were there for training, not simply to help us when it might suit our plans. There must be no attempt to exploit them.

The Counsellors-in-Training were given their own head counsellor, a senior member of the staff, their own living quarters, their own integrated programme of theory and practice, teaching methods and camp education. They participated in the different discussion groups, chose the skills in which they wished to specialize, usually concentrating on one each month, and they worked out their own recreational programme and time off.

Each morning they supervised the Ojibways, during the tidying up process, while the counsellors attended the counsellor meeting from nine until nine-thirty. At no time did the Counsellors-in-Training assume the full responsibility for a camper without the special permission of the Director, in which case the Director actually carried the responsibility.

By the end of the summer the Counsellors-in-Training knew our objectives, had a fair understanding of the camp programme and a knowledge of the needs of the younger children, and had become proficient in at least one activity. We gave them what we could of leadership training, but what they gave back to camp in the way of co-operation and loyalty to camp ideals and standards could hardly be overestimated. Their enthusiasm permeated the camp.

With the coming of the old campers on the staff, who had been known for many years by their Christian names, we dropped the title "Miss" for our counsellors and were all called by our given names. This was much more in keeping with the camp spirit.

The Counsellors-in-Training of Glen Bernard and Tanamakoon exchanged visits in alternate summers for many years and sometimes we exchanged with Wapomeo and Inawendawin as well. The different programmes, different methods of packing and tripping, the different ideas regarding council fires, were fascinating topics of discussion. Camp songs were exchanged. The visits were

thoroughly enjoyed and wiped away all early feelings of childish rivalry between camps. The campers became staunch friends, as were already the Directors.

Camper Organization

The campers were divided into tribes. Each tribe elected their own "little chief." A solemn discussion was held on the qualities desirable in a chief and her responsibilities. Nominations were made and the following day voting by secret ballot took place. The coveted post was held for one half season and then a new chief was elected.

The duties of the Little Chief were: to act as representative of the tribe, to make the necessary announcements in assembly, to take leadership at camper meetings and take charge of opening proceedings at the Council Fire.

Each cabin had in addition a representative elected by the cabin group. These representatives along with the Little Chief and Tribal Head, discussed activities and problems concerning the tribe, and gathered constructive suggestions for the programme.

Every child in camp was on a committee of one kind or another, each had an opportunity to exercise initiative and play her part. The campers themselves decided each year what responsibilities they would like to carry. The Ojibways, for instance, usually took responsibility for the grounds around their cabins, for the Ojibway tribe in the dining-room, for gathering wood and making their council fire, and for inspection of cabins. This was done daily when the counsellor on duty and two Ojibways would visit each cabin including the counsellor cabins. This inclusion fostered the universal tidiness for which we had been striving.

The Sioux, aged twelve to fourteen, usually had committees for the care of the grounds around the theatre,

which was in their section of camp; for assisting with props, make-up and lighting the footlights on theatre night, for evening programme, for council fire preparation and for cabin inspection.

In the next age group, the Crees usually looked after their section of camp, the paddle house, the dock, sail boats, tennis court. They took responsibility for raising the flag each morning and for taking it down and folding it at sundown. There were countless little tasks like these for each tribe which they had fun in doing. In addition, the Crees constituted "All-Camp" teams that supervised many matters on which the well-being of the whole camp depended. Since these grew out of our summer experience in citizenship, we shall leave them till later on.

CHAPTER 8

Counsellor and Camper

The Counsellor

CHOOSING her counsellors was among the most important tasks that fell to the lot of the director, since the counsellor was the most vital, single factor in the camp situation and the success of the summer largely depended on her.

In choosing a counsellor, one naturally looked for someone with mature judgment, emotional stability, robust health; someone with the love of the out-of-doors, and understanding and love of children; and with it all, a sense of humour.

In addition, the prospective counsellor had to be skilled in one or more of the camp activities, and must have a capacity for carrying responsibility and for hard work; for counsellorship is a demanding, full-time job.

Many of the counsellors came from our Counsellors-in-Training group, many from universities and other professional fields.

It always seemed to me that as the director was responsible for each counsellor, she must know and care for them as the counsellor knows and cares for her campers. She must know their needs and capacities, give them a job they know how to do and see that they make a success

of it. She is there to help them with their difficulties and back them up in their undertakings, and it is important for them to realize this and feel free to talk things over with her. She should do her best to see that they gain a real sense of achievement by the end of the summer.

Sometimes the director must search about for the best outlet for a counsellor's talents. Perhaps her forte is in personal counselling or story-telling, or she may be able to open up the fascinating world of nature. It is for the director to make the maximum use of these unexpected gifts of a counsellor and not put her in a position she cannot fill adequately. In short, it is the prime responsibility of a director to keep the happiness and welfare of her campers, counsellors and maintenance staff constantly in mind.

Counsellor responsibilities could well be discussed under three headings: their responsibility toward camp and director, toward the campers and toward the other counsellors.

At Tanamakoon we felt that in her responsibility toward camp and director the counsellor had already pledged her loyalty and co-operation when she accepted the post. She had to know the aims and objectives of the camp and incorporate them in her aims for her campers. She would be expected to keep in close touch with the director regarding each child entrusted to her care. We felt she should be ready to respect the various policies of the camp and should be willing to abide by the decisions she had helped to make earlier.

With regard to the campers, it was understood that the counsellor's first responsibility was her cabin group. They were her family, and she must be aware of all the factors that had to do with their health and safety, their cleanliness and tidiness. She must see that they were happily adjusted in their cabin group. She must help them face the issues that arise through living together, and help them

to find the solution to their difficulties, on the basis of what was best for all concerned. She must guide them in their choice of activities, know that they were progressing satisfactorily in them. Nor was that all. A counsellor had to be willing to give a leadership that put the interest and welfare of her cabin group first, last and always.

In her activity the counsellor had an opportunity of working with practically every child in camp. Here she would be responsible for seeing that the campers knew and thoroughly understood the safety rules in her particular activity. She would teach them the care and preservation of equipment and she would be expected to be enthusiastic and punctual.

Through skills well taught, the counsellor gave the campers the satisfaction of personal achievement, but the counsellor who was a perfectionist, sometimes proved discouraging to the campers. Often the one who really cared for the children she was teaching, was more effective than the one who was more academic. Through the skills, the counsellor had the opportunity of helping the campers gain self-reliance, resourcefulness and dependability.

The responsibility of counsellor to counsellor was chiefly in living and working happily together, in helping each other work out an effective programme for the campers. Counsellor morale was the key to staff efficiency. When the counsellors were a happy co-operative group, the campers were happy too.

The remuneration to counsellors in the early years was twenty-five or fifty dollars for the summer and their living expenses. Counsellorship was looked on as a valuable experience — the money did not seem so important.

Today, the counsellor would gain even more out of the experience, but conditions have changed. It has become the normal procedure for college students to put themselves through college by taking positions for the summer and there have been an ever-increasing number of well

paid positions for them. Consequently, camps have had to compete with other summer offers. Salaries have gone up accordingly, with the result that camp fees have had to be raised.

The Camper

There was a time when squabbles in the younger tribe were altogether too frequent. In the world outside war was threatening. The similarity of the two situations was expressed in the phrase, "No cabin quarrels this generation, no world wars next generation." The idea took fire and became a slogan. Afterwards, when the children found themselves quarrelling, up went the signal they had agreed on and they stopped immediately. Then they tried to find the solution to the situation through discussion without bickering. Of course it did not stop it completely, but they at least discovered a better way of settling disputes.

We started having discussion groups with the Ojibways in a very informal way, simply talking about ways in which we could gain the most out of our summer at camp. It was not long before all the tribes wanted their own discussion group, so each set out to find a secluded spot in the woods or along the shore where they could build a council ring of their own. They cleared the ground and built the fireplaces. The men cut the cedar logs and put them in place for seats and Monday nights were set apart for the tribal council fires. The procedure was the same for all three tribes, the Little Chief lit the fire as the campers sat in a circle and watched. Then each camper rose and placed her faggot repeating — "I, Mary Jones, of the Cree (or other) tribe, add my faggot to the fire." This act symbolized her contribution to the tribe. Then came the tribal song, followed by suggestions from campers on any matters of tribal business. This business



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